



Lenin

The State

The main text today is Lenin's lecture, "[The State](#)" (attached; download linked below).

In "[Bourgeois and Proletarians](#)", the first section of the [Communist Manifesto](#), Karl Marx wrote: *"The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."*

In other words: The modern State is the executive committee of the ruling bourgeois class, of which there is, and cannot be, any other such ruling executive committee or totalising authority.

The State manifests itself in many ways. Not only is it Legislature, Executive and Judiciary, but it also includes the “Special Bodies of Armed Men” (police, intelligence and military), the “sovereign document” of the Constitution, the State Owned Enterprises, “Delivery” departments like Education, Health, and Public Works; and others.

As communists we hold fast to the concept of the State as the instrument of class power that enforces and perpetuates bourgeois class dictatorship in our country. We do not believe that the State is neutral, or above class struggle. The State is the principal instrument of class struggle on behalf of the ruling bourgeois class.

We intend that there should as soon as possible be no class division, and therefore that the State as we know it would become redundant, and give way to social self-management, or in other words, to communism: true freedom.

Yet the term “State” is used in other, less strict senses, and we as political people who must communicate with others, do also use the word in other senses than the above. For example, we sometimes use the phrase “Developmental State”, which even if we ourselves would qualify its meaning, is nevertheless widely understood as meaning a State that is

equally beneficial to all classes (i.e. it is a “win-win”, or classless, or neutral state).

We are fortunate to have the lecture that Lenin [pictured] gave to students in Moscow in 1919 on this topic, wherein Lenin asks *“what is the state, how did it arise and fundamentally what attitude to the state should be displayed by the party of the working class, which is fighting for the complete overthrow of capitalism - the Communist Party?”*

Lenin referred his audience to Engels’ [“Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State”](#). Engels’ book sweeps through the whole human story and explains the fall of the women, as well as class struggle and the state. We will take it as our next item in this part, and then, for a fuller treatment from Lenin, there is the extraordinary work that he produced between the two Russian revolutions of February and October, 1917: [“The State and Revolution”](#), Chapter 1 of which will be our third item in this ninth part of our course.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Lecture on The State, 1919, Lenin](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).